

‘Understanding Positive Employee Attitudes to  
Organisational Change: The Emergence and Impact of  
‘Actor Presence’

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# Abstract

Governments, businesses and other organisations often are forced to restructure their working practices and sometimes radically. This is not unusual. What is unusual though is the way the literature on organisational change has framed the discussion and debate using a predominantly negative language for the past seventy years (see for example Dent and Goldberg, 1999; Ford et al, 2008) The second alarming trend is that as organisations restructure and re-calibrate their relations with staff and customers, not a lot of research has been devoted to employees who, having been negatively affected, have inversely positively impacted on change initiatives. This paper is interested in investigating employees' attitudes and how they have found reason to re-develop these to contribute positively to organisational change.

This paper explores the direction of this re-development and what benefits there are for research and practice. It is noted from the interviewee responses that there is a marked shift from the organisational change literature which emphasises on negativity with a few exceptions (see Procter and Randall, 2015) to a language characterised by an attitude of taking initiatives, of strengthening employees' contributions, of bottom-up innovations and a spirit of 'can do' which appear to be taking hold in the four case study companies. While it is relatively easy in the literature to describe employees' reactions to the changes (Rodrigues and Collinson, 1995), the introduction of the concept of 'actor presence' is additional in positioning our theoretical understanding of the positive attitudes of staff who are challenged.

The paper introduces the concept of 'Actor Presence' as a way to contextualise and account for employees' attitudes. The concept highlights the way staff develop their attitudes for effectively dealing with change from the inside by re-asserting not only their 'presence' (Nevejan and Brazier, 2011) but also their 'actor presence' or if one wills, their ability to contribute as agents effectively. It appears possible to combine the contextualised nature of the research with strategies that employees have articulated from their responses to form a more complex and dynamic perspective of studying organisational change than is available at present. This is the paper's contribution to organisational change.

## Keywords

Actor-presence, research, organisational change, employees and managers' attitudes.

## Introduction

Organisations respond to changes by reducing their activities, by maintaining some core operational functions or expanding them. Where aspects of this are reported in the literature, a range of employee attitudes are identified (Piderit, 2000). These attitudes are broadly captured in two main approaches. These are categorised as 'passive' and 'active' approaches to reflect how employees have responded to the challenges that managers try to resolve. The study reported in the paper

concerns the way employees channel their contributions and change their attitudes when they have been adversely challenged in four organisational change situations.

In addressing the issue of organisational restructuring and to see what role employees may play, the study is guided by the question: 'how do employees adapt their contributions and attitudes such that they could contribute to successful organisational restructuring?' The study is concerned with the way employees adapt their contributions and attitudes thereby demonstrate they have 'actor presence'. This is despite the negative working environment and the negative reporting. The study therefore focuses on addressing what it is that employees do when they and their organisations are internally and externally challenged to change their culture. Interestingly, employees appear to attempt to 'recalibrate' (Golembiewski et al, 1976: 134) their relations with their managers and change their contributions and their environment (see Agnew, 2005). There is a significant need for the literature to talk more positively about employees' contributions to organisational survival. This ability is what has been referred to in the paper as having 'actor presence'.

The paper contributes to the theoretical debates by identifying two main approaches through which employees are perceived to channel their activities. The concept of 'actor presence' is proposed to capture both the much talked about negative as well as the increasing positive contributions. Through their actor presence employees channel not only their positive attitudes but also their resistance, their frustrations and their ambivalence as a way to deal with managers' imposition and coercion to cooperate. Actor presence seeks to combine a variety of attitudes to show how these have led to positive and effective change. The contribution of the concept in the literature is aimed at reporting the competence that employees accrue as a result of being aware of the value of each other's contributions and how a collective group of individuals can make a positive difference.

In the second section the paper looks at the issues on organisational change, the third section lays out what research methodology, data collection methods and analytical processes were used whilst the fourth section presents and analyses the research findings, including the paper's main contribution of 'actor presence'. Its emergence from the data and the discussions show a way to capture and report employees' positive contributions in the fifth section. Concluding statements including future research direction are presented in the sixth section.

## **Approaches to attitudes and reactions**

The issues raised in the study are covered using two approaches from the literature. The first approach focuses on employees' attitudes. These are mainly described as resistance (Dent and Goldberg, 1999). Contributions are perceived by managers as something negative to be dealt with through their attempts to re-shape or even impose on negativity (Dawson, 2003).

A more worrying pattern in the debate is when attitudes are neglected or even on the employees blamed (Krantz, 1999). The latter are viewed as 'undesirable' (Coch and French, 1948) by management. Although more recently the trend has been to 'develop capabilities for change'

(Stensaker and Meyer, 2012) the direction and contribution of these developments need to be complemented by the proposed actor presence conceptual development.

The first approach does not necessarily tell us much about what makes certain employees feel inspired (see Krugman, 2012) to the point where they become able to contribute by re-shaping the change. Something more uplifting than resistance or ambivalence or passivity is needed to produce an alternative narrative to the 'resistance to change' (Dent and Goldberg's, 1999). The combination of humour and 'the good intentions of resisters' (Piderit, 2000: 792) entails a different type of engagement between management and staff than simply the control of resisters or rendering people inactive/passive. The concept of 'actor presence' which combines active engagement recognises resistance as an ingredient to counter further resistance to bring about potential successful change. In essence employees need to be aware of the potential negativity of resistance and what is involved as part of a pre-requisite to strengthen their contributions.

The second approach focuses on managers, *as well as* employees' reactions to change. Despite its advocacy by Jermier et al (1994), a lot more work is needed to understand what these reactions are and, more importantly, how they can be used to contribute. Firstly, the literature could benefit further by developing a concept that brings together attitudes and reactions from the two main approaches to identify what is needed for successful change. Secondly, this type of professional support will especially be useful to organisations that continue to struggle practically to implement change. In such situations employees are regarded as passive. Thirdly, both approaches still abound with negative concepts of depression and failure. Fourthly, the transition from passive to active approaches has witnessed an examination of emerging complex forms of attitudes to which our paper contributes.

## *Passive Approaches*

In order to ascertain the extent to which employees and managers contributed to the development of their presence, the paper identifies 'passive' and 'active' approaches. Each has its characteristics derived from the literature. The first approach captures employee attitudes which are highlighted as inactive and unwanted. Early studies refer to the use of variables and other types of models that capture what can, at best, be described as passive behaviours. Employees are similar to bystanders of change. This first approach heavily relies on the use of an input/output system (also see Handy, 1995). Its proponents are silent on how employees feel 'liberated' and how they could have a greater impact (Flood, 1990, 16). It is assumed that employees are inactive.

The reactions theorised by Coch and their followers are not proactive. They are neither able to identify challenges nor capable of affecting organisational direction. In this respect, they have characteristics of passive approaches. Managers adopt 'hard' measures to keep employees passive which might have led to unintended consequences such as 'discontent' (Graham, 1984: 220), anxiety (Argyris and Schon, 1978) and 'un-readiness' (Armenakis et al, 1993) for change.

This type of theorising is not interactive; it is not able to react to management or to how an organisation might start to re-calibrate what it does and instantiate a more positive direction (Golembiewski et al, 1976) At best, the first approach identifies what is to be provided as input depending on what management wish to realize as the preferred output. Hence such theorising can be viewed as a form of control.

## *Active Approaches*

Characteristics of a particular set of attitudes are grouped under the second approach (see Dent and Goldberg, 1999). Its various characteristics need to be examined to see what they may contribute. The cognitive characteristic refers to an individual's assessment about a change and their intentions. The literature emphasises characteristics that drive and those that might inhibit change. However the set of attitudes do not necessarily address possible ways in which people are driven to proactively shape a negative situation or what others do to them in the process.

As part of a sub-approach of the second set of theoretical developments, more complex forms of characteristics are captured. This is a major step in what people can contribute by way of presence. For example, when talking about technological change Schiavone (2012) identifies how people communicate their professionalism as resistance. However, there is still heavy reliance on resistance and control (Pieterse et al, 2012; Pitsakis et al, 2012; Mahadevan, 2012). Other theoretical sources are more upbeat in terms of how these may begin to have an impact on developments.

The concept of 'presence' is used as part of the new developments (Nevejan and Brazier, 2011; Nevejan, 2009). It is claimed that through 'presence', members can 'witness' each other...can contribute... and not be controlled to react to "trust" (Nevejan, 2009: 59). However, Nevejan and her colleagues have taken neither the negative employee attitudes nor how those negative characteristics could form part of employees' contributions to bring about effective change into consideration. There is therefore the need to address this deficiency in the theory/concept.

What seems especially relevant in terms of the current paper's contribution is the possibility of using the name presence to note employees' attitudes in the variety of ways they choose to contribute (actively and/or passively). When they choose to do so, employees could be seen as strengthening their interactions with their managers and colleagues and signaling a shift in the literature of negativity and passivity. It is anticipated that doing so will help reshape the debates on organisational change. In addition, the authors propose 'employees' actor presence' to highlight when people start to become proactive and to innovative even when managers exert constraints. In this sense, they begin to show direction in their interactions with each other; i.e. in their presence. This theory should identify and report important aspects of what happens when employees start to engage with other people and start to be instrumental in re-developing their contributions.

Actor-presence theorising arose in an attempt to address some of the deficiencies in the existing literature. It signals a theory that is no longer part of the passive approach or even the control paradigm. It is part of the characteristics that people contribute to their attitudes, including those of resistance. If they are to be used and become beneficial, such use must be part of the characteristics

of people being analysed as well as serve as theory. The 'actor presence' theorising appears to be quite powerful and may already be heralding a radical shift in the history of developments in organisational change research and its conceptualisation. Doing so means re-positioning employee attitudes and contributions more positively than has been predominantly portrayed.

In order to find out ways through which employees re-directed their attitudes more positively in developing the use of their actor presence, the authors asked the following research questions:

1. What types of attitudes do employees and management have during organisational change?
2. How do employees and management react when challenged?
3. Have the attitudes contributed to or hindered organisational change?

The first research question arose from an initial exploration of the literature on employees' and managers' attitudes to change. The second research question emerged from the first. The third arose as part of the authors' interest to see whether the literature on attitudes can contribute to what an emphasis on presence can offer in practice.

## **Research Methodology**

In order to answer the research questions, interviews were held with employees and managers as part of the broad approach to understand how changes were implemented and whether employees felt challenged to change. The authors attempted to find a suitable frame to make comparisons of domains of data possible. This process has been referred to as abstraction, examples of which include critical evaluations of what employees experienced or stories.

The study was started to find out what happened when employees and management are challenged by organisational change. It was decided to organise a series of interviews in four companies that were contemplating changes to deal with new challenges. All four UK-based organisations operate in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, while some have branches internationally. These companies are Bakkavor-Laurens Patisserie, Eden Housing, Longhurst Housing and Lagat. They are small to medium sized companies which employed a range of different nationalities with a predominant number being UK and EU citizens. Longhurst Housing Association ran a group of organisations that provided housing that may be rented for a shorter contracted time or sold. In the first series 68 interviewees were interviewed (2006/2007) across the four organisations. Broad topic areas covered organisational changes, how these were implemented and reacted upon – in terms of what managers and employees did in their roles. This worked out as 17 interviewees per organisation. The breakdown is as follows Bakkavor-Lauren's Patisserie - 10 employees and 7 management staff, Longhurst Housing - 10 employees and 7 management staff, Eden Housing - 10 employees and 7 management staff and Lagat -10 employees and 7 management staff . All four companies have waived anonymity.

Bakkavor-Laurens Patisserie, the UK's largest cake manufacturer, produces cream cakes for national supermarkets and also caters for smaller private events. The organisation needed to expand and integrate into its new parent company, the Bakkavor Group, with headquarters in Iceland. They were facing an increasing demand of their products. Eden Enhanced Housing provided care and housing services to approximately a hundred and fifty people with learning and other disabilities as well as with health problems. The company aimed to expand. Lagat provided educational support, career advice and counselling services to students. The challenges included extreme market pressures, a fast increase in customer demands for a better service and dwindling government's financial support – hence either a fast increase in staff or a decrease. This meant employees and managers had to restructure operations as well as adopt the necessary types of attitudes. Longhurst faced challenges to modernise their services and to provide additional affordable homes to clients.

In 2011 a second set followed, with 17 interviewees (with four interviews per company with the exception of five at Bakkavor). The second saw a more equal distribution of management and employee interviews. The authors were guided by how the organisational changes affected people's attitudes and reactions. The analysis of the combined set highlighted a process via which employees strengthened their presence and contributed to its conceptual development. The organisations confirmed the way employees and managers were categorised, as well as the diagnosis that they faced unusual challenges (Klapper et al, 2006). Role differences were intended to emphasise personal differences and what each category could contribute as attitudes and reactions.

The first set of interviews focused on what types of attitudes employees had and how these influenced their contributions. This provided the opportunity to follow-up or clarify issues of being challenged in the second set. Responses were taken to refer to the way each interviewee identified what they did in response. Analyses were performed to decipher the interview themes from each company and for both roles. The respective company themes were combined where they showed similarities and reported elsewhere where differences emerged.

The stages were introduced to show what management did as they implemented the changes and how employees reacted. Respondents were asked to add comments of attitudes and reactions they considered relevant. Some made additions, others did not. Responses were compared. This approach is referred to as recursive abstraction or a fusion of horizons in hermeneutics (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). The responses were analysed and the results fitted two sub-headings (referred to as stages) – the stages highlighted how employees developed their attitudes and strengthened their presence. Those that did not fit are reported elsewhere. Both researchers checked the results and their analysis. Among the results are evaluations of what happened and a set of stories.

## **Research Findings and Analysis**

### *Stage 1: Management's attempts to control employees' attitudes and employees' attitudes to these*

The first stage of the story of the developments of attitudes and reactions refers to statements about people becoming aware of the challenges and of the need for redirection. When both groups are referred to the aim is to emphasise the differences in the employment categories, in implementation practices and reactions. Employees identified the difference between the first stage when such a need arose (e.g. restructuring) and previous times – when managers were open, collegial and worked as a team – and present times when these attitudes became less distinguishable. Employees at Eden said ‘[Eden] staff have always been made to feel valued; managers used to be your friend’ while those at Laurens painted a different picture.

Before the restructuring, managers treated employees with respect. Initially managers tried to increase the positive contributions from employees – managers started to make plans, strategised by attempting to extend developments, looked for new resources (e.g. recruited new, more skilled staff, expanded business operations etc). Secondly, managers started controlling what they considered the negative attitudes including the resistance from employees (e.g. attendance monitoring, disciplinary hearings and stricter quality control measures and ‘hard’ measures, such as cutting down on staff rewards and other remuneration packages). Managers started to withdraw their engagement with staff. One manager at Eden talked about ‘hard decisions have to be made’ whilst another employee said ‘Some managers [at Laurens] do not have a good relationship with staff. They get easily annoyed’.

For example, Longhurst managers introduced extra staff supervision whilst Eden staff talked about sticking with health and social care regulations. Employees at Eden started to feel that previous entitlements (e.g. holidays, bonuses etc) had become curtailed. Employees amended their working practices, to assimilate the restructuring and started exploring ways to further resist management practices. It was noted in Eden that some employees were not turning up for work and in general informalised the new arrangements. In Longhurst some staff were unhappy with a ‘strict chain of command’. A manager at Eden noted attempts to ‘make work arrangements less strict and to erase job boundaries’. At Laurens both management and staff cite ‘big [employee] turnover figures’ and some managers ‘trudging on’ as if to suggest they are ‘not bothered’ with the new arrangements.

Managers at Laurens responded by openly, consciously manifesting what employees considered improper emotional outbursts – for example frequent shouting and labelling employees as ‘lazy’. Those at Lagat talked to staff to ascertain the differences. The environment became tense and staff were de-motivated as they ‘don’t want to work here [at Laurens]’. Managers started to push employees by demanding more for less adding to a climate of negativity at Laurens.

Managers at Laurens and Longhurst started to emphasise that employees changed their attitudes to include greater staff dedication and cooperation. Laurens staff responded by not complying with management’s requirements. Management methods became reliant on their power to map out patterns of staff attitudes and to increasingly stifle these. Laurens and some Longhurst employees felt as if they were not valued. Employees started to develop other forms of communication to



bypass managers' 'constant' attempts at controlling them. Employees saw their actions as 'innovative'.

Management's hard measures were increasingly, deliberately targeted at restructuring attitudes, rather than encouraging employee welfare/wellbeing. Longhurst employees were mandated to discuss the quality of their work and achieving performance targets through Staff Development Initiatives (SDIs), Laurens employees were asked to take up additional working shift hours to meet customer demands for quality cakes whereas Eden staff had to cover long distances to care for a dispersed population of elderly people. Increasing demands from government and other regulatory bodies such as the Care Quality Commission and the Department of Health and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office rose as managers tried to deal with the challenges. Ethical considerations in line with employees' personal attitudes of wanting to be treated with dignity and humaneness are caught in a maze of a growingly over-regulated, over-controlled environment.

## *Stage 2: The Emergence of Actor Presence:*

### *Conditions for the emergence of Actor Presence*

Some employees started to blur the line between what is personal and what is organisational as a way to deal with managers' (apparently draconian) strategies of over-regulating work and imposing on staff. Some employees at Lagat stated to develop initiatives and remarked 'I want to get Lagat to grade 1' whilst another said 'I have done too much in this company to stop'. These contrasted with the official ones they were originally contracted for. By so doing they began to boost their capability and to re-direct their attitudes to contribute to the changes. They re-discovered attitudes like personal integrity, self-dignity, self-respect and humaneness. A Laurens employee remarked 'If you treat people as adults they respond accordingly' as a way to reassert themselves.

Laurens' employees mentioned 'losing' respect when they have been 'shouted at'. However, such treatment inversely re-created an increasingly conscious sense of 'value' and self-dignity not only at Laurens but also at Longhurst and Eden. Under pressure from shareholders and business owners, managers in Laurens formulated strategies that can be described as if they were input-output formulations. Employees started to increase the ways they would like to be judged and thereby started to create a more positive environment. They underscored the importance of an alternative point of view or an alternative to management's narrative of command and control.

Managers at Laurens, Longhurst and Eden were seen to start to backtrack from their strategies and objectives to safeguard their personal survival. In that situation, they initiated managerial come-/fight-back by an increasing emphasis on their personal power. Some managers said 'Managers and shareholders have the power here [at Laurens]' while other managers talked about developing personal initiatives [at Lagat]. Employees considered that managers' responses to the situation appeared to have failed to address how they could contribute more effectively to the challenges.

## *Actor Presence*

Interestingly, employees increasingly showed attitudes as if they were independent of their managers, conscious of their active engagement with change (i.e. they become agents of and for the changes) and of their capability to influence their organisational changes. They began to create new collectives by 'cross working' across departments in Laurens and Lagat in which they supported and facilitated others to develop, while introducing a new spirit of exploring forms of talking to each other. They contributed to each other's wellbeing and to their organisation's competence to implement the changes. These activities demonstrated that employees were increasing their ability to communicate using stories. They began to modify the regulatory procedures proposed by management and the work they could innovate in.

The way they are reported tells a collective story, serving as a way to combine the individual stories into a meta-story in which employees strengthened their actor presence. In terms of their similarities they appeared to show that employees have created a buffer (i.e. some form of resistance) between themselves and their managers and still managed to redirect their contributions to a preferred state – one in which they demonstrated (and have strengthened) their presence. They used the formal procedures as well as the informal ways of 'communicating' to facilitate their intentions. An employee said: 'Management [at Lagat] need to be talking to staff more informally'.

The official relationships between organisational members at Lagat and with external parties (e.g. Connexions and Prospects staff and other education, counselling providers) resulted in tensions. There is an increasing consciousness that Laurens' employees considered managers who seek to 'manage people out' of the business as absolutely inept and counter-productive (i.e. negative) to the pressures. However, managers continued their attempts at depersonalising relations by 'emphasising on measuring employees' performance as they latter were devising counter strategies to strengthen ways of contributing more effectively and positively to the challenges.

## **Discussions**

The benefit of using resistance as part of people's contributions and what they may feel plays a quite different role to that of passive approaches (Armenakis et al, 1993). Instead of relying on data that is determined by the company or through the power of its managers, one has to deal with data for which employees and managers are both responsible: data concerning their attitude contributed to the company; data concerning the company constrained what they could contribute (Coch and French, 1948). In other words, employees had to exhibit a range of attitudes and thereby be active and 'present'. This answers the first research question on 'what types of attitudes employees and management have during organisational change'. Employees must minimise the unintended consequences of being passive and 'unready' bystanders to change that could prove detrimental (including negative resistance) to their companies. Managers are faced with the responsibility of balancing their personal and official power. Employees could not behave independently from what they did and expect to be 'liberated' to effect successful change. This type of organisation has been referred to as based on Actor-Presence and it responds to the second research question on how attitudes are viewed by managers and employees.

Employees appeared to have developed something that showed that they are capable of re-channeling negative actions into positive attitudes. They began to contribute innovatively, despite the 'hard' measures from management (Graham, 1995). By the second stage employees showed that resistance could be channeled more positively contrary to earlier claims by Dent and Goldberg (1999). Actor presence shows employees are prepared to work round impositions and control from their managers. They prove able to develop stronger buffer positions, allowing them to increase the value of their contributions in the 'new' organisation. That from which they derive their ability to act as effective and as efficient change agents or if one wills, their power (French and Raven, 1962) consisted of activities whose groupings show that they may be fittingly named, as if in an additional 'meta' story in a theory of 'actor presence'. The third research question on the extent to which 'attitudes contributed to or hindered organisational change' has therefore been answered. This type of development introduces a form of theorising (referred to as actor-presence or AP) that differs from the usual form of observational representation or passive approaches, commonly used in the work of Flood (1990) and his followers. It proved viable in that employees re-developed a spirit of 'can-do', as they fundamentally restructured their attitudes in challenging environments via a sequence of two stages. AP made it possible to name the development of people's attitudes as 'their actor-presence'.

To attempt to resolve the deficiencies from the literature, two major approaches were reported: active and passive approaches. However, these were not sufficient enough to explain the complexity of the phenomena being investigated nor provide us with some theoretical stability. To deal with these inadequacies, a new type of increasingly complex theorising – AP is introduced, and is categorised in terms of its fundamental difference from passive approaches and the failure to incorporate resistance as part of the emerging active approaches (Pitsakis et al, 2012; Mahadevan, 2012). Both active and passive approaches either showed that employees had various types of attitudes or that they were too passive in reshaping the direction of organisational change. The questions were asked: 'What new phenomenon has been found?' 'Will it be easy to explain using traditional approaches of passivity and/or resistance?' Finally, 'what additional or different type of theory would it be called by? AP has made it possible to allow for the identification of a significantly larger amount of employee and management attitudes as well as reactions to challenging circumstances, i.e. variation that might be increased by including control but also resistance, anxiety, discontent and so on and still achieve organisational restructuring. This is despite the negativity propagated by Dent and Goldberg (1999) and the recalibration anticipated by Golembiewski et al (1973).

AP allows for a more complex and comprehensive study of what employees contribute to organisational change and how these can be theorised as part of developing employees' 'actor presence'. The stage-by-stage presentation of the emerging actor presence shows how the contributions of employees can be viewed more positively and how these can be utilised by both managers and employees to effectively deal with the negativity within change environments.

AP focuses on actions and the reported attitudes are instantiated by multi-agent actors. Its combination with and the way it is theorised using the concept of presence has been referred to as

‘Actor-Presence’ (or AP). AP differs from the notion of presence as used by Nevejan (2009) and others subsequently in that it allows for the identification and theorising of a variety of attitudes in ‘developing and strengthening actor-presence’ – as a consequence of what employees can do when controlled in what emerged as a negative set of environments. The theoretical contribution of AP being proposed is used to describe the experiences, contributions as well as the attitudes of employees in four companies that can be argued to have been under sufficient stress to such an extent that resistance could have been channeled less positively (see Dent and Goldberg, 1999; Krantz, 1999; Armenakis et al, 1993). AP made it possible for people’s points of view to be made to count (Piderit, 2000; Procter and Randall, 2015).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper has told the story of how employees who found themselves in challenging situations re-developed their contributions more actively. The theorising of what they did is strongly linked to the concept of ‘presence’ as they both enhance trusting relationships (see Nevejan, 2009) but additionally to those that resist imposition on participants’ physical, emotional and mental wellbeing/wellness at work. These attitudes respond to the first research question which was directed at finding out ‘what types of attitudes employees and management have during organisational change’ as well as the second one on ‘how these attitudes are viewed by employees and management’.

The AP concept makes it possible to talk about and theorise instances where and when people are able to identify certain inappropriate attitudes that impact negatively on the psychological and emotional behaviour of employees, to fight against their frustration (Coch and French, 1948) or ‘discontent’ (Graham, 1995: 220) or anxiety (Argyris and Schon, 1978) or ‘un-readiness’ (Armenakis et al, 1993) to effect positive change. The operationalisation of the concept via the two-stage-story-model has also helped to answer the third research question on whether ‘the attitudes contributed to or hindered organisational change’ by showing that it did in a positive and proactive way. This is different from the passive forms that have been explored in the literature or the rather negative depictions of employees’ attitudes when they find themselves challenged by others’ actions of control. A further study could look at how ‘actor presence’ might be resisted or more specifically how the resistance within actor presence might be resisted or reshaped in larger or in multinational organisations...

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